

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

An important part of our resource base, cultural sites in the state forests and forest recreation areas serve as a window to the past and as a means to help us understand our relationship with the environment. These resources can be divided into two distinct groups, historical and prehistoric.

Historic cultural resources are those that date from the time of European contact (circa 1650) to the present. Any artifact (an item made or shaped by humans) or feature (a non-portable artifact) more than 50 years old is considered an historic resource and requires archaeological clearance before being disturbed, regardless of its significance. This includes a variety of items that can tell us much about what occurred on the land that is now a state forest or a forest recreation area. Examples of historic sites include old homesteads, farm sites, school sites, cemeteries, and old survey monuments. In most cases, the buildings are no longer there. The former's presence can be discerned by foundations, foundation stones, wells, yard trees, perennial flowers, fencing and trash piles. These often tell much about the past attempts to clear and farm the land, for instance the network of wire fencing attests to the vast amount of livestock grazing.

Other cultural resources came about after the creation of the state forests. The most common and important of these are the many buildings and structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). While most of the original camp structures were razed when the program was discontinued, many are still in use today as service and administrative buildings on the state forests and forest recreation areas.

Prehistoric cultural resources are those resources resulting from indigenous populations prior to European settlement. Often located below the surface of the soil, these resources are not as visible as historic resources and generally consist of camp sites, village sites, work sites, and burial sites. These are discerned by the presence of bones, tools, pottery, charred wood, and other artifact debris.

### **Clearance**

Prehistoric and many historic resources are not readily visible and are often located only through systematic field investigations.

To protect prehistoric resources, archeological clearance must be obtained for many soil disturbing activities. As a rule of thumb, all soil disturbing activities involving ground excavation over twelve inches deep or twelve inches wide will require archaeological clearance from the Division. A Microsoft Word format form is available that is to be completed and submitted to the Forest Archaeologist to request clearance. Minor soil disturbing activities do not require clearance. Examples of these are post or gate installation, or digging to repair a

broken waterline (site was already disturbed during waterline installation).

Clearance is required before any state forest or forest recreation land is disposed of through sale or exchange. Because the disposal process is done through Central Office, the Central Office will be responsible for requesting clearance.

Most historic resource sites are discernible with careful examination. When disturbance of these sites is likely, clearance must be obtained. Common situations where disturbance is likely are when hazardous conditions such as open wells or dilapidated structures are to be filled or razed. The request for clearance is submitted to the Forest Archaeologist.

Many historic structures are located in service and recreation areas. These include buildings, stairways, picnic tables and cookers. These often require regular maintenance and occasional major rehabilitation. Any work on these structures that is beyond cosmetic maintenance and involves structural changes must receive clearance from DHPA. Requests for clearance will be submitted to the Forest Archaeologist.

If there are questions whether clearance is required, contact the Forest Archaeologist.

## **Inventory**

The Forest Archeologist will maintain an inventory of cultural resources on the properties.

## **Protection**

Cultural resources are subject to damage or destruction through a variety of activities. Properties will take actions to help ensure the stability of cultural resources. The cultural resource inventory will be reviewed during planning of property management activities to identify if known resources may be impacted. A field reconnaissance may be performed in the activity area to try to locate previously unidentified resources. All known cultural resources in activity areas will be visibly marked. Unless a management activity directly involves the resource, all activity operations, especially with equipment, will avoid the immediate area of the cultural resource. To protect cultural resources on the properties, the Division will not willfully disclose the locations or other information about cultural resources to the public. Individuals needing information on cultural resources on the properties should contact the Forest Archeologist.

Cemeteries and burial sites are generally a unique problem in terms of responsibility and ownership, which may be unclear at times. Generally if there is not a clear exception in the State's deed, or there is no separate title chain for the cemetery parcel, the State should be

considered the owner if it owns the surrounding land.

Maintenance responsibility for cemeteries is often unclear and varies. Some cemeteries are very well maintained, while others receive no maintenance. The parties maintaining cemeteries include the state properties, cemetery associations, families, township trustees, or volunteers. Much of the variability in maintenance depends on accessibility, past history, and current use.

Cemeteries on state forest and forest recreation area lands will be documented as cultural resources. All cemeteries on the properties should be evaluated periodically. Cemeteries with reasonable access should receive some periodic, basic maintenance to prevent loss of features. Generally this maintenance involves control of trees and shrubs that could damage the features. Properties wishing to undertake work that involves repairing or resetting stones and markers will coordinate with the Forest Archaeologist and obtain appropriate clearance. It may be desirable to regularly mow some cemeteries because of their visibility and visitation. This should be evaluated by the properties based on available access and available property resources. Whenever possible, the properties will coordinate with township trustees, cemetery associations, families, or volunteers to provide cemetery maintenance assistance. Cemeteries with no access obviously cannot be considered for maintenance. Questions about cemetery maintenance or condition should be directed to the Forest Archaeologist.

### **Section Bullet Summary**

- Archaeological clearance is needed for all except the most minor ground disturbing activities. Any major work on historic structures also requires clearance.
- When possible, management activities will avoid cultural resource areas.
- Properties may provide some basic maintenance to cemeteries on the properties.